

The Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 26, 2022

God Himself Is Present

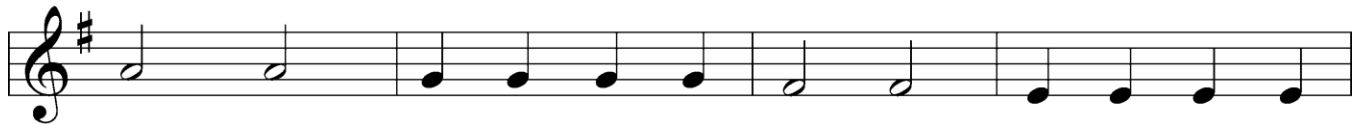
Lutheran Service Book 907, Lutheran Worship 206, The Lutheran Hymnal 4



1 God Him - self is pres - ent: Let us now a - dore Him
2 God Him - self is pres - ent: Hear the harps re - sound - ing;
3 Fount of ev - 'ry bless - ing, Pu - ri - fy my spir - it,



And with awe ap - pear be - fore Him. God is in His
See the hosts the throne sur - round - ing. "Ho - ly, ho - ly,
Trust-ing on - ly in Your mer - it. Like the ho - ly



tem - ple; All with - in keep si - lence; Hum - bly kneel in
ho - ly!" Hear the hymn as - cend - ing, Songs of saints and
an - gels, Wor - ship - ing be - fore You, May I cease-less -



deep - est rev - 'rence. He a - lone On His throne
an - gels blend - ing. Bow Your ear To us here:
ly a - dore You. Let Your will Ev - er still



Is our God and Sav - ior; Praise His name for - ev - er!
Hear, O Christ, the prais - es That Your Church now rais - es.
Rule Your Church ter - res - trial As the hosts ce - les - tial.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

(*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 85:8–10, 13; antiphon Psalm 85:7

L Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

C Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

L Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

C Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

L Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.

L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

C Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

1 Kings 19:9b–21

^{9b}Behold, the word of the LORD came to [Elijah], and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” ¹¹And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹²And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. ¹³And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁴He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” ¹⁵And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. ¹⁶And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. ¹⁷And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. ²⁰And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” ²¹And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Romans 10:15b, 18b; Isaiah 52:7b, alt.

L How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news,
C who publish peace and bring good news of salvation.
L Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
C and their words to the ends of the world.

Psalm 16

- L** ¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
C ²**I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”**
L ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.
C ⁴**The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.**
L ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
C ⁶**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**
L ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
C ⁸**I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**
L ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.
C ¹⁰**For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.**
L ¹¹You make known to me the path of life;
C **in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Galatians 5:1, 13–25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . .
¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Luke 9:51–62

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 9th chapter.
C Glory to You, O Lord.

⁵¹When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶And they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” ⁵⁹To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ⁶⁰And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” ⁶¹Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” ⁶²Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

“Come, Follow Me,” the Savior Spake

Lutheran Service Book 688, Lutheran Worship 379, The Lutheran Hymnal 421



1 “Come, fol - low Me,” the Sav - ior spake, “All in My
2 “I am the light, I light the way, A god - ly
3 “My heart a - bounds in low - li - ness, My soul with
4 “I teach you how to shun and flee What harms your



way a - bid - ing; De - ny your-selves, the world for-sake,
life dis - play - ing; I bid you walk as in the day;
love is glow - ing; And gra - cious words My lips ex-press,
soul’s sal - va - tion, Your heart from ev - ’ry guile to free,



O - bey My call and guid - ing. O bear the cross, what -
I keep your feet from stray - ing. I am the way, and
With meek-ness o - ver - flow - ing. My heart, My mind, My
From sin and its temp - ta - tion. I am the ref - uge



e'er be - tide, Take My ex - am - ple for your guide.
well I show How you must so - journ here be - low.
strength, My all, To God I yield, on Him I call.
of the soul And lead you to your heav'n - ly goal."

5 Then let us follow Christ, our Lord,
And take the cross appointed
And, firmly clinging to His Word,
In suff'ring be undaunted.
For those who bear the battle's strain
The crown of heav'nly life obtain.

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Devotional thoughts:

What do the following have in common? "Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand," "Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ," "Jesus Foretells His Death," "Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus," "The Transfiguration," and "Jesus Heals a Boy with an Unclean Spirit."

These six events plus five more all occur in Luke 9 before today's Gospel lesson! This chapter is jam-packed with important events in Jesus' ministry. At the very end, we find these two episodes: "A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus" and "The Cost of Following Jesus." With so many significant things happening in this chapter, it would be easy to overlook these last two. To be honest, if I were choosing to preach on Luke 9, I would likely choose one of the other events. But let's dive into "A Samaritan Village Rejects Jesus."

What do you know about Samaritans? If you are like me, you are acquainted with the "Good Samaritan." You can read about him in the next chapter (Luke 10:25-37). You might remember that Jews and Samaritans don't get along and a few other details. I was surprised to learn that Samaritans and Samaritanism (the religion of the Samaritans) still exist in Israel today.

Earlier in Luke 9, Jesus clearly spoke of His death and resurrection (Luke 9:21-22). This must happen in Jerusalem. Our Gospel lesson begins with Jesus starting His journey to Jerusalem where He will experience the events surrounding Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Good Friday, and Easter. On the way, He chose to pass through a Samaritan village. The region of Samaria lies between Galilee and Judea. A direct route would take Jesus through this area.

The Samaritans only recognized the first five books of the Bible. They did not worship in Jerusalem but at a temple built on Mount Gerizim. This would have been enough for hostility between the Jews and Samaritans. But the rift between the two groups runs much deeper. During a brief period of independence before the Romans took over, the Jewish rulers of Judea destroyed the Samaritan temple and devastated Samaria. It is no surprise that Samaritans and Jews did not get along.

Jesus wanted to spend some time in this Samaritan village. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus held no animosity toward Samaritans. He loved them just as He loves every one of every ethnic or national background. However, Luke 9:53 tells us, "But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem." The Samaritans couldn't tolerate anyone who would associate with Jerusalem and the temple there.

This brings us to the heart of the matter. James and John who had requested to sit at Jesus' right and left hand, said to Him, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (It may be that this event is what prompted their nickname "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17)).

James and John must have felt justified in their righteous indignation. They seriously felt that a whole village rejecting Jesus was worthy of the same punishment dished out to Sodom and Gomorrah! But Jesus would have nothing to do with it! He rebuked them! This should come as no surprise. After all, before long, Jesus would look down from the cross and say, "Father, forgive them."

There are at least two lessons we can learn from this almost overlooked event at the end of Luke 9. First, we shouldn't be surprised when we are rejected without cause. It happens all the time. It happened to Jesus.

We suffer from great divides in our country. People who hold differing political or social views are belittled and condemned. You might be the target of unjust treatment simply because you are known to be a Christian.

Second, what should you do when that happens? We could retaliate. I know that there have been several times in my life that I would have been on the side of James and John. But that is not the way of Jesus. Jesus never sought to harm anyone. He was the target of much animosity. Yet He practiced what He preached. He turned the other cheek and walked away.

But if these are the only two lessons we learn, we have missed the most important one. Jesus is the savior of all! He went to Jerusalem for the Samaritans! He went to Jerusalem for James and John. He went to Jerusalem for you and me.

The divisions we experience in our country are nothing new. Divisions happen because we are sinful. Large numbers of people in our country advocate violence against those who hold differing political or social views. But the greatest division of all is the separation that sin causes between God and humanity.

Like the Samaritan village, by our sinful nature, we all reject Jesus and the salvation He won for us on the cross in Jerusalem. But Jesus came to heal that division by sacrificing Himself on the cross.

The full and complete healing of the divisions caused by sin will be realized when Jesus calls us to live with Him for all eternity. We earnestly seek all divisions to come to an end.

Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to join us. Some people will reject Jesus until their dying day. For them, the division caused by sin will be confirmed for all eternity.

We pray for these people to come to repentance and receive Jesus as their savior. He is always ready to welcome home prodigal sons and daughters. He "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

God's richest blessings to you in Christ.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:4-7).

L O God of our salvation, when Your Son set His face to go to Jerusalem and the cross, His zeal would not be deterred. Grant us to pray with the same fervor and boldness, trusting that You hear us for the sake of Jesus.

C Amen.

L O God of compassion, You established the family to be a place of protection and growth. Grant that our homes would never become a stumbling block to the kingdom of God, but that they would serve to foster within us the fruit of the Spirit.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, govern the kingdoms of this world according to Your holy and gracious will. Protect those in harm's way because of the war in Ukraine that continues to cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer. Ease the divisions in our country highlighted by recent Supreme Court decisions. Curb what is evil and promote what is good among us wherever we live in this fallen world.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from illness. Be with those who mourn. Grant to them the hope and assurance of a blessed reunion in heaven.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Jesus Shall Reign

Lutheran Service Book 832, Lutheran Worship 312, The Lutheran Hymnal 511



1 Je - sus shall reign wher - e'er the sun Does its suc -
 2 To Him shall end - less prayer be made, And end - less
 3 Peo - ple and realms of ev - 'ry tongue Dwell on His
 4 Bless - ings a - bound wher - e'er He reigns: The pris - 'ners
 5 Let ev - 'ry crea - ture rise and bring Hon - ors pe -



ces - sive jour - neys run; His king - dom stretch from
 prais - es crown His head; His name like sweet per -
 love with sweet - est song; And in - fant voic - es
 leap, un - loose their chains, The wea - ry find e -
 cu - liar to our King; An - gels de - scend with



shore to shore Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
 fume shall rise With ev - 'ry morn - ing sac - ri - fice.
 shall pro - claim Their ear - ly bless - ings on His name.
 ter - nal rest, And all who suf - fer want are blest.
 songs a - gain, And earth re - peat the loud a - men.

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Third Sunday after Pentecost

June 27 – July 2, 2022

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Introit Psalm 85:8–10, 13; antiphon Psalm 85:7

- L** Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.
- C** Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.
- L** Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.
- C** Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- L** Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- L** Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

Psalm 85:8 is a key verse for this week. It is found in our introit and begins, “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak.” In the Gospel lesson, the Samaritan village absolutely refused to hear what Jesus has to say. Let us never be like them. Rather let us follow the example of Elijah who was ready to hear the word of the Lord and follow God’s direction.

What are you expecting to hear when God speaks? Our introit gives us an answer. Psalm 85:8 continues with the answer, “He will speak peace to his people.”

James and John were looking for judgment upon the Samaritan village but that isn’t why Jesus came. Jesus came to speak peace! He is the Prince of Peace. He came to heal, comfort, and care for people who are hurting and burdened with sin. To do this, He offered Himself on the cross.

Psalm 85:9 continues “Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him.” His word is a word of salvation for those who fear, love, and trust in Him.

In some circles, it is common to call the Bible the rule book of life. Indeed, it does contain rules for living a perfect life. But that is not the purpose of the Bible. The purpose of the Bible, God’s word, is to be a word of salvation. John tells us, “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection are the fulfillment of God’s promise of steadfast love for us. God’s steadfast love is referenced three times in our introit! This is the word that we long to hear from the Lord. While you and I may be fickle and wavering in our commitment to the Lord, His love for us is steadfast! It never wavers or changes.

Yes, we are anxious to hear what the Lord will speak. We are eager to hear of God’s love and forgiveness for us in Jesus!

- | | |
|----------|---|
| L | Let us pray. Lord thank You for Your word of peace in Jesus. Continue Your steadfast love among us that we would always be ready to hear about the salvation that Jesus won for us. Amen. |
| C | Amen |

Tuesday

- | | |
|----------|--|
| L | In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. |
| C | Amen. |

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

- | | |
|----------|---|
| L | Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia. |
| C | Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia. |

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

L Let us pray: Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Our collect reflects a deep and abiding truth. Love is not native to our hearts! It must be grafted in!

Yes, there is an imperfect love that can be found naturally in our hearts. But this love is a self-serving love rather than a self-sacrificing love.

During my active years of ministry, I was always amazed that a couple could stand before the altar of the Lord and promise a love so deep that they would be willing to die for each other. Yet, sometime later one or the other would decide to leave because they “weren’t being fulfilled.” How does that happen?

Love for God and love for our neighbors must be grafted into our hearts. It is a gift from the Holy Spirit.

In a way, every sin is a sin of selfishness. We sin when we decide that God’s laws fail to serve our needs. We choose a course of action that “is pleasing to our eyes” rather than right and wholesome.

Love is putting others first. Jesus could have avoided the cross by putting Himself first. But His deep love for us caused Him to set aside His self-interest and offer Himself up for us. This is real love. “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10 NIV).

Let us pray: Lord of all power and might, author and giver of all good things, graft into our hearts the love of Your name and nourish us with all goodness that we may love and serve our neighbor; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

L Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Psalms 16

L ¹Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

C ²**I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.”**

L ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.

C ⁴**The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.**

L ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

C ⁶**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**

L ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

C ⁸**I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

L ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

C ¹⁰**For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.**

L ¹¹You make known to me the path of life;

C **in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Psalm 16 is a wonderful psalm that stands on its own. Walther Roehrs writes, “David revels in an unreserved commitment to God in life and death¹.” Read through the psalm again, imagining David’s thoughts as he was writing these words.

But there is more to this psalm than you might suppose. Would you be surprised to know that Peter quoted this psalm in his Pentecost sermon? (Acts 2:25-28) He spoke of the prophetic nature of verses 8-10. He explained it this way:

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.”

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” (Acts 2:29-36)

This short little Psalm of David that gives us insight into the faith of this great king of Israel is also a prophecy of a greater King who would be raised from the dead!

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the gift of the psalms and all of Holy Scripture. Grant us the eyes of faith to see in Your holy word the message of salvation through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Amen.

Thursday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

L Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

1 Kings 19:9b–21

^{9b}Behold, the word of the LORD came to [Elijah], and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ¹⁰He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your

¹Walter H. Roehrs and Martin H Franzmann, joint author, *Concordia Self-Study Comentary*, electronic ed., 348 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, c1979).

covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”¹¹ And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”¹⁴ He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”¹⁵ And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.”¹⁶ And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.¹⁷ And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death.¹⁸ Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

¹⁹So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him.²⁰ And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”²¹ And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

God has given me the privilege of visiting Mount Carmel. It is a dramatic place. On top of the mountain is a large statue of Elijah in a beautiful garden. Nearby, you will find a chapel and attached buildings. From the rooftop, you can look out over the lush Jezreel Valley and see the brook Kishon.

It is on Mount Carmel that Elijah had his famous confrontation with the prophets of Baal. The prophets of Baal were slain at the brook Kishon. This was a high point in the work of Elijah (1 Kings 18:20-40). But all that is in the past as we read the Old Testament lesson for this week.

The evil queen Jezebel is out for revenge. She sent a message to Elijah swearing that within twenty-four hours he would be dead! (1 Kings 19:1-8). This brings us to a low point in the life of Elijah.

Despite the victory that God granted to Elijah over the prophets of Baal, he chose to run from Jezebel. He made it all the way to Horeb, the mount of God. (This is an alternate name for Mount Sinai.)

At this point, God asked him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah explained that they had killed God’s prophets and that he was the only one left. And they were now trying to kill Him, too!

Have you ever felt like Elijah? Have you ever felt that you had done everything right and still God’s enemies were “out to get you?”

So God came to Elijah in a way that he hadn’t expected. He came not in a mighty wind or an earthquake. God came to Elijah in “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12 KJV). And in that voice, He gave Elijah a word of encouragement. God had reserved for Himself 7,000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal!

Sometimes individual Christians or congregations can become discouraged. They long to do great things for God but all they get for their troubles is grief and anguish.

However, this is a near-sighted approach. God is never without people who love and trust Him.

When you feel alone, where do you turn in Scripture? Some of us remember, “Lo, I am with you always.” Others remember God’s promise to never leave them or forsake them. Let’s add to the list this encounter between God and Elijah. In his nearsightedness, Elijah thought that He was only one left but God had reserved 7,000!

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for coming to us in the still, small voice of Scripture. Let us continue to trust Your promises even in the face of great opposition through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday – Canada Day!

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

L Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Galatians 5:1, 13–25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . .

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Happy Canada Day! I began my ministry in Canada as a missionary-at-large in Northwestern Ontario. I have many family and friends who live in Canada. In so many ways, Canada has been a great blessing to me.

These verses from Galatians are quite extraordinary! They catalog the differences between Christian living (walking by the Spirit) and living apart from Christ that is “in the flesh.” Paul tells us that all of God’s law is fulfilled in one word: love!!! The Christian life is characterized by love. Love for God and love for your neighbor.

Then to make sure that we understand, Paul lists what it means to live apart from Christ through the works of the flesh. These are the things that are opposed to Christ:

Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. Unfortunately, these are the things that fill our newspapers, talk shows, evening news reports, popular movies, etc. We are surrounded by them. Too often, we participate in them.

They present quite a contrast to what we want to be. It has become common for secularists to try to characterize Christians as hateful and intolerant but nothing could be farther from the truth. Rather, Paul teaches us that Christian living consists of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control! There is nothing bigoted, hurtful, or mean in that list!

But what are we to do when the devil, the world, or our own sinful flesh convince us to follow the desires of the flesh? The answer is repent. Seek forgiveness in the cross of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

This is the way to begin each new day because of God's ultimate love for us in His only-begotten Son. Jesus loved us so much that He gave His life so that we can live. Since Christ has loved us, we can love one another.

The Church has changed since the time of my parents and grandparents. Some congregations consider themselves successful if they follow the corporate model of good business practices and fiscal responsibility. Others consider themselves a success if their Sunday morning worship is highly rated and worthy of an award from the entertainment industry. I have always thought that a congregation is a success when there is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control! May the Lord grant it.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the gift of faith. Grant us a full measure of the Spirit that we may bring forth the fruit of faith through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for our Canadian brothers and sisters:

Bless, we implore you, O Lord, our nation and people. Defend our liberties and make us faithful citizens of our land. Give wisdom and courage to those who govern us: Elizabeth our Queen, Julie our Governor General, Justin our Prime Minister, and our Premier, that they would do so with honesty, humility, justice, and diligence, so that we may lead quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness. Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Romans 10:8b, 10

L The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,

C the word of faith that we proclaim.

L For with the heart one believes and is justified,

C and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Verse of the Day: Luke 9:51

L Alleluia, Alleluia. When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

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Galatians 5:1, 13, 25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. . . .

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. . . .

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

From ancient times until today, non-Christians have harbored many misconceptions about Christianity. One of the greatest is the notion that the goal of Christianity is to get people to do good things. While this is a worthy cause and a great many believers and unbelievers strive to make it happen. It is not the goal of Christianity.

Let me relate to you an event that illustrates this misconception. Some years ago, I was engaged in a

cardiac rehab program with a few other individuals. It involved walking on a treadmill or using a stationary bicycle while attached to an EKG and being monitored by a nurse. Over time, our small group of people got to know each other pretty well and conversations flowed freely.

While I was on a bicycle, my nurse asked, "How long are your sermons?" I responded, "About 20 minutes." She replied, "Oh. That is short. My pastor preaches for 45 minutes." To this, a gentleman on a nearby treadmill interjected, "Sermons shouldn't be more than 5 minutes long. Tell us what we are doing wrong and then tell us to stop!" If the goal of Christianity is to get people to do good things, this gentleman was right.

The goal of Christianity is not to get old sinful people to start doing good things. That is simply whitewashing tombs. Jesus says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). People can look good on the outside and still be corrupt on the inside.

The goal of Christianity is to change bad people into good people. When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, the old sinful self dies and the new self is born. Good people do good things, that is their nature. Paul tells us that this is living by the Spirit.

Christian sermons proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). On the cross, Jesus paid for the sins of the world. Through faith in Him, our sins are forgiven and we become good and holy people. Now we have the freedom to do good, wholesome, and God-pleasing things because we have become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Christian sermons must always proclaim this Gospel. Otherwise, we are just white-washing tombs.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for making us new people in Christ. Grant that we would be led by Your Spirit and walk in the newness of life so that we would always display love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When we fail, bring us to repentance and grant us again the joy of our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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